

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 225608

17

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 225608

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, NATO

SUBJECT: REUTER ITEM ON AWACS "SPY PLANE"

REF: NATO 5151

1. IN RESPONDING PRESS QUERIES, MISSION MAY DRAW ON
FOLLOWING GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR NOON BRIEFING, SEPT. 19,
BUT NOT USED SINCE SUBJECT NOT RAISED:

BEGIN QUOTE

QUESTION: THERE IS A REPORT THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER IN
A CABLE TO NATO MEMBERS HAS OFFERED TO PAY NATO COUNTRIES
A QUARTER OF THE SALE PRICE IN OPERATING COST IF THEY BUY
A NEW AMERICAN SPY PLANE. CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT
THAT?

ANSWER: THE E-3A OR AWACS (AIRBORNE WARNING AND CONTROL
SYSTEM) AIRCRAFT IS NOT A "RADAR SPY PLANE." RATHER, IT
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PAGE 02 STATE 225608

IS A COMMAND AND CONTROL AIRCRAFT WHICH HAS BEEN JOINTLY

DISCUSSED AND CONSIDERED AMONG OUR NATO ALLIES FOR WELL OVER A YEAR. THE AIRCRAFT EMPLOYS ADVANCED RADAR, COMPUTER AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY TO INTEGRATE AND DISPLAY PERISHABLE BATTLEFIELD INFORMATION TO COMMANDERS OF LAND, SEA AND AIR FORCES. THE SYSTEM

INTEGRATION CAPABILITIES OF THIS AIRCRAFT WERE DEMONSTRATED IN EUROPE EARLIER THIS YEAR. NATO IS ADDRESSING THE POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF SOME OF THESE AIRCRAFT UNDER ITS ESTABLISHED COMMON FUNDING PROGRAM. THE UNITED STATES' SHARE IN SUCH NATO INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PROJECTS HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN APPROXIMATELY 25 PER CENT.

QUESTION: DID THE SECRETARY MAKE SUCH AN OFFER IN A SEPTEMBER 10 CABLE TO NATO MEMBERS?

ANSWER: I AM NOT GOING TO GET INTO THE SPECIFICS OF THE SECRETARY'S COMMUNICATIONS WITH NATO MEMBERS.
END QUOTE

2. AWACS PROGRAM IS SUBJECT ARTICLE JULY 1975 ISSUE AIR FORCE MAGAZINE ENTITLED "THE ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS DIVISION."
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